



# News Release

**IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**  
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**Release 2003-53**

**DAM SAFETY INSPECTORS WANT**  
**CAREY AREA DAM STORAGE RESTRICTED**

For Immediate Release  
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State dam safety inspectors have ordered a Carey reservoir company to prove why the 92-foot-high Fish Creek Dam should not be breached to prevent its possible failure due to severe deterioration, the Idaho Department of Water Resources announced today.

The 1,700 feet long dam is not in imminent danger of failure provided the amount of water stored behind the structure in coming months is reduced by about two-thirds, dam safety officials advise.

Inspectors say the dam should be filled to no higher than 67 feet full. That amount would reduce the amount of water stored in the reservoir behind the dam to about 4,300 acre feet, one-third of its rated capacity of more than 12,000 acre feet.

The dam was built in 1921 and is a series of concrete arches anchored between concrete buttresses. State inspectors had been worried about the structure for some time now. An inspection of the dam in late August revealed continuing significant concrete deterioration so bad that holes have appeared in seven locations through two-foot thick concrete buttresses.

IDWR last year required the Fish Creek Reservoir Company, owners of the dam, to install a special dam-failure warning system. Tests have shown the system is less than 100 percent reliable at all times.

Special flood plain studies of the structure have shown that about a dozen homes and a state highway would be flooded should the structure fail. Those homeowners have already been advised of the risk.

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Dam safety engineers say breaching is necessary because the structure's outlet pipes are too small to release enough water to keep the reservoir level at or below the 67-foot mark on the dam's upstream face. The structure's spillway is located at the 88-foot level.

IDWR Director Karl J. Dreher signed the show cause order issued to the Fish Creek Reservoir Company on October 31. The order gives the reservoir company until November 30 to show why the dam should not be breached to make sure the restricted 67-foot storage height is not exceeded.